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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 002461

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STATE FOR WHA, WHA/PPC, WHA/USOAS, AND WHA/CEN  
NSC FOR DAN FISK

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SUBJECT: HONDURAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FINALLY OVER: LOBO  
PUBLICLY CONCEDES AND CONGRATULATES ZELAYA

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2453 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James G. Williard;  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: National Party presidential candidate Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo conceded the presidential election to Liberal Party presidential candidate Manuel "Mel" Zelaya at noon on December 7 in public comments. Zelaya graciously accepted Lobo's concession moments later in public comments. Lobo's statement was preceded the evening of December 6 by a public statement by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), with the support of all three TSE magistrates, that reported on the status of the election tabulation process. While it did not decisively declare Zelaya the winner, it stated that the remaining votes would not change the final result. That statement followed the December 5 evening private meeting between Lobo and Zelaya. The National Party finally realized the presidential race was lost, but Post expects the Nationalists to fight hard over specific electoral table vote counts key to mayoral and congressional races. End Summary.

TSE Releases Statement 12/6: Zelaya Win Won't Change

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2. (U) The evening of December 6, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) released a statement reporting on the status of the presidential vote count tabulation. In addition to reporting that it had tabulated 88.66 percent of the electoral tables and that Zelaya leads Lobo by 3.73 percent (Zelaya has 918,408 votes at 49.90 percent and Lobo has 849,816 votes at 46.17 percent), the TSE also reported that although the rest of the votes still need to be tallied, the outcome will not change. The TSE called upon all political parties (specifically their candidates and leaders) to pacify any tensions and proceed in an exemplary manner, as "all of Honduras" continues to wait patiently for the full vote count - expected by next week.

3. (SBU) In a conversation with PolChief December 6, TSE President Aristedes Mejia confirmed that all three magistrates supported the statement, as was later made clear in press coverage of the statement. The morning of December 7, National Party congressional candidate and key party official David Matamoros confirmed that the National Party fully supported the TSE statement as well. The press has reported heavily on the statement, but has done so in a much more decisive manner than the TSE with headlines such as El Heraldo's "TSE: Zelaya is Winner," La Prensa's "TSE: Mel Won," and La Tribuna's "TSE Makes Official the Triumph of Mel."

Lobo Concedes and Calls Zelaya

4. (U) At noon on December 7, Lobo held a very brief press conference after meeting with the 128 National Party congressional candidates. Lobo announced that he had phoned Liberal Party "President-elect" Zelaya to congratulate him on his victory. He thanked everyone who voted for him and thanked the Honduran people for a "good" election. Lobo added that he supports democracy and, while he will support the Zelaya Administration, he called for a strong opposition force to keep the government in check. Zelaya shortly thereafter held his own press conference, accepting Lobo's concession, talking about his future administration, and calling for all Hondurans to work together.

Zelaya Cabinet Shuffle Continues

5. (U) Meanwhile, Zelaya continues to shuffle his prospective cabinet. As of December 7, the following changes and additions have been announced:

- Yani Rosenthal named as Minister of the Presidency (chief of staff) instead of Minister of Commerce and Industry; No apparent reason given for the change.
- Gabriela Nunez has reportedly turned down Minister of the Central Bank of Honduras.
- Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, a writer, has been named the

Minister of Culture Arts and Sports; the same position he held in the Reina administration.

- Roberto Babum has been named an Official Advisor to the President.

- Enrique Flores Lanza has also been named an Official Advisor to the President.

16. (SBU) Meanwhile, the El Heraldo gossip column reported that the buzz was that Jorge Arturo Reina was out as Foreign Minister because he could not travel to the U.S.

It's Finally Over

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17. (C) Comment: Although the TSE has not made anything official, between its forwarding-leaning press statement and Lobo's press conference conceding the race, it is now safe to call Mel Zelaya President-elect Zelaya. Who will form Zelaya's Cabinet and who will make up the Congress still remains unsettled. Squabbles over specific vote counts from electoral tables, key to many mayoral and congressional races, will continue for quite some time. End Summary.

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